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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 003591

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ALEKSEYEV'S READOUT OF
TRIP TO PYONGYANG

Classified By: Amb. Alexander Vershbow. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) Assistant Secretary Hill, Vice Foreign Minister Chun Yung-woo and Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Alekseyev of Russia met in a trilateral meeting to hear Alekseyev's readout of his meetings in Pyongyang on October 13. In his high-level meeting with DPRK officials, Alekseyev made it clear that Russia was very displeased with the DPRK's decision to conduct a nuclear test following hours of consultations in which Moscow had argued against such an action. Although Russia has little it can do now in the form of sanctions, Alekseyev was clear that if a second test occurred, Russia would support full and comprehensive sanctions against North Korea. Despite the DPRK's rhetoric in recent statements, Alekseyev said he thought that the DPRK was ready to come back to the negotiating table, without preconditions. According to Alekseyev, the key was to provide a way for the North to come back to the table while allowing them to save face. Alekseyev said he planned to talk with the DPRK Ambassador in Moscow again in 10 days to see what the mood in Pyongyang was at that time; allowing them some time to absorb some of the pressure as a result of UNSCR 1718. Hill said he would like to see a proposal for a "roadmap" from the North Koreans or some substance to back up their alleged desire to return to the talks before Washington would take their comments seriously. Hill also outlined the Secretary's agenda for the balance of her Asian trip after

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leaving Seoul. Hill focused on three areas that the Secretary will cover: UNSCR 1718 and how it will be

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implemented, PSI as it relates to Iran and the DPRK, and a path back to negotiations with North Korea. END SUMMARY.

ALEKSEYEV'S TRIP TO PYONGYANG

2. (C) As the Six-Party Talks negotiators from the U.S., Korea, and Russia got together for a meeting, the focus was on Alekseyev, who had just returned from meetings in Pyongyang on October 13. Alekseyev gave a readout of Moscow's contact with the DPRK in the time leading up to the October 9 test as well as the most recent meeting on the

13th. Alekseyev said that he was briefed by the DPRK on the logic behind its nuclear test and what they hoped to achieve.

The DPRK claimed that they were hoping to secure a more respected position at the negotiating table and a more secure environment for their people. "We need to show the world that we are not bluffing. No one takes us seriously, especially the U.S." were two statements that Alekseyev quoted from DPRK officials showing their reasoning for going forward with the test. Alekseyev told them to "think twice" before doing the test because it was sure to bring the opposite effect. He also assured the DPRK that a test would bring about a tough UNSC resolution that Russia would likely support. Alekseyev also described the North Koreans' sentiment that they had been betrayed twice by Russia throughout the recent events: once when Russia supported UNSCR 1695 and again when Russia gave a "tense" reaction to the nuclear test.

13. (C) Alekseyev said that Deputy FM Kim Gye-Gwan had said the North was very interested in coming back to the Six-Party Talks, without preconditions, and a test was a means to that end. Yet, the DPRK was afraid of appearing weak if they unilaterally announced their return to the talks. Alekseyev expressed confidence that once the DPRK started to feel the pinch of the new sanctions in the next month or two, it would have even more incentive to come back to the talks. Since it was still not clear how China would send a clear message of its anger and frustration with the North, the timetable for the DPRK to return the talks remains unclear. Alekseyev was confident throughout the meeting that the DPRK regime could not survive under the current situation of international isolation and with the forthcoming implementation of UNSCR 1718.

PYONGYANG PRESS COVERAGE OF TEST

14. (C) According to Alekseyev, the press in Pyongyang has published very little about the test. What was published portrayed the test as a scientific experiment and not a great national accomplishment. Alekseyev noted that his observation was based on the publicly available media under the control of the central government and expected that the internal state communications (for members of the elite) carried a much different story.

A WAY BACK TO THE TABLE

15. (C) Shifting the conversation to the future, Alekseyev suggested that "two-way traffic" between the U.S. and the DPRK was necessary in order for the DPRK to save face while coming back to the table. One idea was for the USG to release its grip on DPRK funds at Banco Delta Asia. Alekseyev was quick to point out that the DPRK was not looking to set preconditions, but simply to save face. When A/S Hill suggested that Secretary Rice wanted to see Yongbyon frozen and IAEA inspectors returned at the outset of resumed Six-Party Talks, Alekseyev said that would be too drastic in the short term. Hill said he would like to see a proposal for a "roadmap" from the North Koreans or some substance to back up their alleged desire to return to the talks before Washington would take their comments seriously. Hill added that nobody in Washington was interested or had any confidence that the North would negotiate in good faith.

EFFECTS OF A SECOND TEST

16. (C) When asked how Russia would respond in the event of a second nuclear test by the DPRK, Alekseyev quickly responded that they would support "all-around sanctions, a full blockade." He went on to explain that he had invested a significant amount of time to explain the ramifications of a nuclear test to DPRK officials. Despite their understanding of his points, they proceeded with the test; much to Alekseyev's surprise. After they went forward with the test,

Alekseyev said he was concerned because the DPRK obviously did not care what other people thought or was too far out of touch to understand the consequences of its actions. Therefore, Alekseyev said, a second test would show that the DPRK is completely unreliable and they needed to be reined in more tightly.

SECRETARY RICE IN RUSSIA

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17. (C) A/S Hill outlined the Secretary's agenda for the balance of her Asian trip after leaving Seoul. Hill focused on three areas that the Secretary will cover: UNSCR 1718 and how it will be implemented, PSI as it relates to Iran and the DPRK, and a path back to negotiations with North Korea.
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